News from Cam Gordon Council Member, Second Ward June 2012

http://www.minneapolismn.gov/council/ward2

Corporate Personhood. With my strong support, the Council has unanimously passed a resolution supporting a US Constitutional amendment that would make clear that corporations are not persons. This amendment would help regulate the toxic and out-of-control corporate spending in our political processes, spending that I believe directly threatens our democracy. The Council has also gone on record in our Federal Legislative Agenda supporting transparency in corporate political spending on elections. This would not have been possible without all of the groundwork done by the amazing organizers at Move to Amend, http://movetoamend.org/minnesota.

DREAM Act. The City of Minneapolis is the first city in the US to go on record formally supporting President Barack Obama's policy directive to the Department of Homeland Security to defer deportation of undocumented children. I am very proud that the City has taken this action in support of a policy that will positively impact the lives of many members of our community.

Hiawatha Transmission Line. The City has won a major victory on the Hiawatha Transmission Line. On a 3-1 vote, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission approved a tariffing plan for the Midtown Hiawatha Transmission Line where all costs, including the extra costs associated with burying the line underneath 28th St E, are to be distributed throughout Xcel Energy's five state rate base. In other words, the Minneapolis ratepayers will not be required to bear any extra costs for the project beyond those paid by all other rate payers in Xcel's territory. This is the final step in a three year project by the City to ensure that the transmission line, if installed, was installed underground on 28th Street. Many people deserve credit for their roles in making this happen. This could not have happened without the hard work of Greg Sautter and Corey Conover in the City Attorney's Office. Our community partners. especially the Midtown Greenway Coalition, were also instrumental. As I have said for years, I continue to question the need for this new transmission line and wish that Xcel had chosen to meet the growing demand through increased efficiency and renewable energy production in Minneapolis, but this decision gives the City our strong second preference.

Unisys Contract Audited. The City's Internal Audit department has conducted an audit of the City's information technology contract with the Unisys Corporation. The contract, which began in 2007 and ends in 2015, is currently valued at \$86,363,655. The audit found significant issues in our contract management with Unisys. First, quoting from the report, "While IT management reviews the invoices for accuracy and completeness, there is no evidence to support the invoice itself was reviewed. Also, the support documentation provided by Unisys only show total dollars without adequate details used to calculate the totals (i.e. rates and hours). Additionally, while there are written procedures on the IT invoice review process, the procedures are very brief and do not include detailed steps." Second, there are concerns about our contract monitoring: "IT management does not receive relevant reports from Unisys as stated in the contract. Also, there is currently no agreed upon process in place to validate that the City is receiving the most favored equipment prices and/or taking advantage of any special promotional rates or discounts." I continue to have serious concerns about the amount

of money the City spends on this information technology contract, and the lack of oversight found in this audit compounds that concern. This seems like one of the clear consequences of outsourcing what had been – and arguably should still be – a core City function. In June the Council referred this report to the Ways and Means Committee for further review.

Farmers Market Finder. The City now has an online interactive map at www.minneapolismn.gov/farmersmarkets that makes it easy to find one of the 29 convenient farmers markets now operating in Minneapolis. Clicking on the map pins will show the address, season dates and opening times for each market. Many Minneapolis residents can reach a farmers market on foot or by bicycle, which is good exercise and doesn't pollute. Seven of the markets accept "electronic benefits transfer" cards as payment to give residents on federal food assistance easier access to fresh, healthy food. Thirteen of the farmers markets are special small markets that the City licenses to make fresh and affordable produce available to low-income neighborhoods.

Fire Department Master Plan. The Minneapolis Fire Department will be giving a report on its Agency Evaluation and Master Plan at the Public Safety, Civil Rights and Health Committee meeting on July 11th. This is an independent, comprehensive evaluation of the Fire Department compiled by Emergency Services Consulting International and will help us see how the department compares to similar departments and consider recommendations to address short, mid and long term strategies to improve effectiveness and increase efficiency.

Sabo Bridge. The City has received the final report produced by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, the firm the City and the County jointly hired to determine why several cable connections fractured on the Sabo Bridge in February. This report concludes that wind-induced cable vibrations caused fatigue cracking in the diaphragm plates, resulting in two cable connections fracturing. City and County staff are in the process of thoroughly reviewing the report and technical details. Moving forward, City and County staff and elected officials will be working to determine the best option for repairing the bridge and the timetable for that work to be completed. The City and County also intend to continue conversations about these findings with URS and the other firms involved with the bridge, including discussions about how the repair costs and the expenses incurred while responding to the incident will be funded. You can read the report here: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@publicworks/documents/webcontent/sabo-bridge-rpt.pdf.

National Night Out. Registration are now being accepted for the August 7 National Night Out online or through 311. If you want to block off your street, you can do so for free through July 24. From July 25 through August 2, there is a \$100 fee. After August 2, no applications for blocking off a street will be accepted. Last year, more than 60,000 Minneapolis residents gathered during National Night Out to celebrate with a record 1,173 events in all 83 neighborhoods of the city. An improved, easier to use online registration process, the quality customer service from 311, and the hard work of the City's Crime Prevention Specialists were just a few of the reasons for the increased participation.

NCEC Appointments. The Council has appointed four new people to the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission: Ishmael Israel from Ward 5,

Grey Massey from Ward 10, Saciido Shaie from Ward 1 and Jeff Martin from Ward 1. The Council also reappointed Jeffrey Strand from Ward 4.

Rental License Revocation Ordinance. The Council is considering changes to the ordinance regarding revocation of rental licenses. I am supportive of this and consider it a careful reorganization of our rental licensing ordinance. I believe that that the City will still have the tools we need to enforce our standards, but this will give us some more flexibility. I am especially supportive of the educational requirements, which will be a very good addition to the ordinance. Among the mandatory training requirements: Healthy Housing Training will be required when an inspector declares a property as substandard, owners with one revocation who own more than two properties will be required to attend a class on the fundamentals of property management, and if someone is seeking to have a license that was revoked reinstated, they will need to provide proof they have attended the fundamentals of property management.

Expansion of Premises Ordinance. The Council has unanimously passed an ordinance amendment by Council Member Schiff that will extend the twelve days of temporary expansions for alcohol-serving establishments that have been in place for the University stadium and downtown to the rest of Minneapolis. This would be an increase from the current eight days (or four two-day events) businesses may hold events. I supported this idea. Every application for a temporary license is subject to review and approval. Failure to meet minimum standards during any event may result in restrictions on or denial of a future license. Requirements such as insurance, security, and mandatory permits, to name a few, must be completed in advance. The on-sale license holder is responsible for the activities and actions occurring at the event. I should note that since these new standards have been in place in Stadium Village, my office has heard no complaints. I have also received expressions of support from Ward 2 businesses, especially folks on the West Bank. Due to questions I've heard from neighborhood organizations, I supported delaying this ordinance for two weeks, to give residents a chance to weigh in.

Electric-Assist Pedicabs. I have given notice of intent to introduce an ordinance that would allow electric-assist bicycles to be used as pedicabs in Minneapolis. The City had been prohibited from allowing this by state law, until Senator Scott Dibble included legislation in this year's transportation omnibus bill that clarified that electric-assist bicycles are a type of "bicycle," not a type of "motorized bicycle." The Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee has taken a position in favor of this ordinance change, and I look forward to working through the details with them, City staff, and the pedicab industry.

Neighborhood Newsletter Winners. Two Minneapolis neighborhoods have won Gold awards in the Neighborhoods USA Newsletter Competition. Congratulations to the Lyndale Neighborhood Association and Standish Ericsson Neighborhood Association on this honor.

Stadium Implementation Committee. The City has appointed sixteen people to a new Vikings Stadium Implementation Committee, including three people with Ward 2 connections: Chris Ferguson, owner of the Stadium Village Dairy Queen; Russ Adams, Executive Director of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability; and Hussein Ahmed, Executive Director of the West Bank Community Coalition. I continue to oppose this stadium subsidy, but I'm glad to see such good people working on its implementation.

American Community Survey. The Council has gone on record opposing the elimination of the American Community Survey (ACS), better known as the Census, or making it voluntary. Many of the City's Results Minneapolis goals are defined by data that come from the ACS, and losing or reducing the validity of those data would be extremely negative.

Fire Truck for Eldoret. The City has donated a 1988 "International Pumper" fire truck to our Sister City of Eldoret, Kenya, for use by their fire department. This is the second used fire truck that we have been able to put to good use in Eldoret.

Bicycle Advisory Committee. I have reappointed Seward resident **Bob Hain** as the Second Ward representative on the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee. Seward resident **Matthew Hendricks** continues to serve as an at-large Park Board appointment. My Policy Aide, **Robin Garwood**, continues to serve as the Council's representative to the BAC.

Homegrown Minneapolis Coordinator. The City has accepted a \$40,000 grant from the General Mills Foundation to more fully fund the Homegrown Coordinator position held by **Jane Shey**. This is vitally important for our continued work to strengthen the local food economy, and I thank the Foundation for their help.

Mattress Collection. The City has entered into a 3-year contract with Project for Pride in Living to recycle the materials from discarded mattresses. This was necessitated, in part, by the downtown garbage burner's decision – which I applaud – to no longer accept mattresses. PPL will deconstruct each mattress to remove the recyclable metals and other materials, helping the environment and creating jobs for low-income residents.

Touchstone Project Closes. The land sale need to build innovative new housing for people with chronic mental illness has been completed. This is great news for the project partners, Seward Redesign, Touchstone and Project for Pride in Living, and great news for the overall Transit-Oriented redevelopment of the old Bystrom Brothers industrial site near the Franklin LRT stop. This keeps the overall redevelopment's momentum, as the next phase – a senior-housing development by Common Bond – continues to move forward.

Funding for Boeser Site. The City has received more than \$2.7 million in outside funds for redevelopment of the Boeser site in Prospect Park. The Council has voted to accept and appropriate a Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) grant of \$2,000,000, a Metropolitan Council Tax Base Revitalization Account Contamination Cleanup (TBRA) grant of \$720,307, and a Hennepin County Corridors of Opportunity Challenge Fund grant of \$275,000 for redevelopment of the site. I am thrilled to see this important project garner these considerable resources, and enthusiastically supported this action. I look forward to seeing a catalytic development on the Boeser site, one which I hope will serve as a model for the SEMI area and University corridor.

Security for Gopher Football Games. The Council has contracted with the U of M to provide the services of our Bomb Unit and Canine Unit for security at Gopher football games at the U of M Stadium. The U of M will be paying the City \$15,000 for these services.

Cupcake Wins Competition. Congratulations to the Cupcake in Prospect Park, and its owner Kevin VanDeraa on winning the Food Network's "Cupcake Champions" competition and its \$50,000 prize! For more information, see the write-up in the Star Tribune: http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/taste/157526785.html.

Sporty's Pub and Grill. The City has approved a Liquor Class D license to the new owner of Sporty's Pub and Grill in southeast Como. The new Sporty's will continue to operate under the same conditions the previous owner agreed to.

4th, **15th** and **6th**. The CHANCE students who studied 4th and 15th Avenues and 6th Street have completed their report. It presents several scenarios for these streets and shares the outcome of the neighborhood focus group. Some decisions need to be made; for instance, there are two different scenarios for 6th Street, one of which can be done for the amount of money currently allocated to 6th, and one that would be more expensive. Public Works staff will be convening a community meeting in July to help review options and gather input. Construction is not expected until 2014 although some changes to parking regulations and improvements to 6th could begin sooner.

Parking Lot A. The City is working on a draft Request for Proposals for redevelopment of Parking Lot A and the nearby Hennepin County right-of-way that has been freed up by the removal of a freeway-style off-ramp as part of the Central Corridor project. This redevelopment is supported by the Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan that was adopted in 2008. Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development staff plan to hold a public meeting in August to gather input on items that should be addressed by the RFP. The RFP document will then be drafted and shared with community stakeholders for public comment.

Longfellow Station Bonds Approved. The Council has granted approval to issue bonds and take the other necessary actions to allow the Longfellow Station project at 3815 Hiawatha Ave to move forward. I was very supportive of this move, which I know has been a long time coming. I consider this an important success for Longfellow and for Transit Oriented Development more broadly.

Hiawatha and 28th **Rezoning.** The Council has passed the 38th Street LRT Station Rezoning. Most of these amendments appear to be aimed at maintaining the consistent zoning for some industrial businesses that are not expected to move for several years. They also protect the current rail right-of-way that the neighborhood hopes will be used as a bicycle and pedestrian trail.

Openings on City Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Civilian Police Review Authority, East Lake Special Service District, Housing Board of Appeals, Senior Advisory Committee, and Stadium Village Special Service District. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.

Ward Office Hours. Every Tuesday morning I hold "Office Hours" in the Ward from 9:30-11:00am. Please feel free to call for an appointment or just stop by.

1st Tuesdays, Hard Times Café (West Bank/University):

2nd Tuesdays, Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como (SE Como);

3rd Tuesdays, Pratt School (Prospect Park);

4th Tuesdays, the Birchwood Cafe (Seward/Longfellow).

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